

CONTENTS

NOVEL

- BAIL OUT! *by Lancaster Salem* 66

SPECIAL FEATURES

- IT'S THE LAW *collected by Floyd Hurl* 11
- MANHUNT'S GUN RACK 122

SHORT STORIES

- THE BLOODLESS BAYONET *by Thomas Millstead* 1
- FOUND AND LOST *by T. E. Brooks* 12
- DOG EAT DOG *by Georges Carouso* 25
- LITTLE NAPOLEON *by Leo Ellis* 32
- S. O. P. MURDER *by Rick Rubin* 37
- THE DEVERAUX MONSTER *by Jack Ritchie* 52
- HOT FURS *by David Kasanof* 123

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The monster had been with the Deveraux family for generations, a proud tradition, an heirloom so to speak . . . but then it began killing people.

THE DEVERAUX MONSTER

BY
JACK
RITCHIE

HAVE you ever seen the monster?" my fiancée, Diana Munson asked.

"No," I said. But I had. A number of times. I smiled. "However everyone seems to agree that the Deveraux monster rather resembles the Abominable Snowman, but with a coloring more suitable to a temperate climate. Dark brown or black, I believe."

"I wouldn't take this at all lightly, Gerald," Diana said. "After all, my father *did* see your family beast last night."

"Actually it was dusk," Colonel Munson said. "I'd just completed a



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stroll and was about to turn into the gate when I looked back. The fog was about, nevertheless I clearly saw the creature at a distance of approximately sixty feet. It glared at me and I immediately rushed toward the house for my shotgun."

Freddie Hawkins summoned the energy to look attentive. "You took a shot at it?"

Colonel Munson flushed. "No. I slipped and fell. Knocked myself unconscious." He glared at us. "I did not faint. I definitely did not faint."

"Of course not, sir," I said.

Colonel Munson, recently retired, and his daughter Diana came to our district some eight months ago and purchased a house at the edge of the village.

Fresh from Sandhurst and bursting for a good show, he joined his regiment on November 12, 1918, and that initiated a remarkably consistent career. In the Second World War he sat in England during Monty's North African campaigns. When he finally wrangled a transfer to that continent, he arrived three days after Rommel's command disintegrated. He fretted under the African sun during the invasion of Europe and when at last he breathlessly reached France, the fighting had moved to Belgium. He still fumed at a training depot near Cannes when our forces joined the Russians in Germany. In the 1950's he set foot in Korea just as the cease fire was announced and

during the Suez incident he was firmly stationed at Gibraltar. It is rumored that his last regiment's junior officers—in secret assembly—formally nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Freddie sighed. "All I have at my place is a ghostly cavalier who scoots about shouting for his sword and cursing Cromwell. Rather common, don't you think? Haven't seen him myself yet, but I'm still hoping."

Diana frowned in thought. "Who else, besides Father, has seen the Deveraux monster recently?"

"Norm Wakins did a few nights ago," Freddie said.

I smiled. "Ah."

Freddie nodded. "I know. Norm hasn't gone to bed sober since he discovered alcohol. However he has always managed to walk home under his own power. As a matter of fact on Friday evening he was quite capable of running. Norm left the village at his usual time—when his favorite pub closed—and his journey was routine until just north of the Worly Cairn when 'something made me look up.' And there he saw it—crouching and glaring down at him from one of those huge boulders strewn about. His description of the animal is a bit vague—he did not linger in the area long—but from what I was able to piece together, it was somewhat apelike, with dangling arms, a hideous face, and glowing yellow eyes. He claims that it was fanged

and that it howled as it pursued him to his very cottage door."

"I shall have to carry a revolver loaded with silver bullets," I murmured.

"Only effective against werewolves." Freddie stretched lazily. "During the last ninety years the monster has been seen dozens of times."

Diana turned to me. "Gerald, just how did your family *acquire* this monster?"

"There are dark rumors. But I assure you, there is *no* Deveraux monster."

Freddie scratched an ear. "Gerald's grandfather had a brother. Leslie. Well, Leslie was always a bit wild and just before he disappeared. . . ."

"He went to India," I said. "And eventually died there."

". . . just before he *disappeared*, Leslie seemed to grow a bit *hairy*."

I remembered a few paragraphs of the letter my grandfather had left to his son—a letter which had been passed on to me by my father.

I first became aware of what was happening when I accidentally came across Leslie at the Red Boar. It is not my usual pub—when I do go to pubs—but I was in the vicinity after seeing my tailor and thirsty for a pint.

When I entered, I recognized my brother's back at the bar. I also noticed that the other patrons seemed to shy away from

him and that the barmaid, in fact, appeared rather pale.

When Leslie turned at my approach, I stopped in shock. His eyebrows had grown thick and shaggy, his hairline was almost down to his eyes, and his complexion had turned a dark brown. He leered when he saw me, revealing stained yellow teeth.

I had seen him less than two hours before, but now I scarcely knew him!

"According to legend," Freddie continued. "Gerald's great uncle never did go to Africa, or India, or some beastly place like that. His brother was finally forced to keep him confined. In the east room on the third floor, wasn't it, Gerald?"

"Someplace about the house," I said. "Though if you have a monster, I should think that a more logical place to keep him might be in one of the cellars."

"Too damp," Freddie said. "And you must remember that your grandfather was rather fond of his brother—monster or not."

Diana's eyes widened. "You don't mean that. . . ?"

"Oh, yes," Freddie said. "Leslie is supposed to have turned into the Deveraux monster."

"How ghastly," Diana said dutifully. "But *why*?"

Freddie shrugged. "Heredity, possibly. The monster eventually escaped. Bit through his chains, I

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believe. The Deverauxs always had good teeth." He looked at me. "Either that or he was let out periodically for a constitutional?"

"My grandfather would never release a monster," I said firmly. "Matter of honor."

Freddie calculated. "If this monster is human . . . I mean solidly animal, then it would be about ninety years old—considering Leslie's age at the time of his metamorphosis. Rather decrepit by now, I should think. Did you happen to notice its condition, Colonel?"

Colonel Munson glowered at the floor. "Seemed spry enough to me."

"I know that people have *seen* the monster," Diana said. "But is it dangerous?"

Freddie smiled faintly. "Eighty-five years ago a Sam Garvis was found dead on the moors. He was frightfully mangled."

"Packs of wild dogs roamed this area in those days," I said. "Garvis was unfortunate enough to meet one of them."

"Possibly. But fifteen years later your grandfather was found dead at the base of a cliff."

"He fell," I said. "Broke his neck."

"Probably he fell because he was being pursued by the monster," Freddie said. "It had been seen just before he died. And then there was your father. Died of fright practically at his front door."

"I did not *faint*," Colonel Munson muttered.

"Father did not die of fright," I said. "Weak heart plus too much exercise." I glanced at my watch and rose. "I'll have to be running along, Diana."

Freddie got up too. "Mother's expecting me. Besides, Gerald needs an escort across the moors. Someone fearless."

The colonel saw us to the door. He was a short, broad-shouldered man with a military mustache in gray prime. "I'm going to hunt the beast."

"Best of luck," I said.

"I'll need it," he said morosely. "Hunted tigers in Malaya, leopard in Kenya, grizzly in Canada. Never got a blasted one."

Freddie and I said our goodbyes, adjusted our collars against the late afternoon's chilly mist, and began walking.

"I rather envy you," Freddie said.

"I'm perfectly willing to give you the monster."

"I mean Diana."

"Quite different."

Freddie brooded. "Of course I can't court her now. You do have some kind of a definite arrangement, don't you?"

"We're getting married in June."

He sighed. "My only hope is that the monster might slaughter you before then."

"No assists, please."

"Wouldn't think of it. After all, we've known each other since time began, so to speak. Served in the same regiment. I saved your life."

"Barely."

"I'm fumble-fingers with bandages and the like. Besides, I couldn't remember where the pressure points were supposed to be."

We walked silently for a while and then he said, "You don't really believe there is a monster, do you?"

"Of course not."

We parted at the branch in the path and I went on toward Stonecroft.

I made my way among the lichen-covered boulders and paused for a moment at the remains of the huts. They were low roofless circles of stones now, but once they had been the dwellings of a forgotten, un-written race. Perhaps they were men erect, but I have always had a feeling that they might have been shaggy and that they crawled and scuttled by preference.

I wondered again what had happened to them. Were they all really dead and dust or did their blood linger in our veins?

The moor wind died and I glanced up at a faint rustle. A dark figure moved slowly toward me in the swirling wisps of fog.

When it was within twenty feet of me, I recognized Verdie Tibbs.

Verdie is simple. Actually quite simple and he likes to roam the moors.

I thought he seemed a little disappointed when he saw me, but he smiled as I said, "Hello, Verdie."

"I thought it was my friend," Verdie said.

"Your friend?"

Verdie frowned. "But he always runs away."

"Who does?"

Verdie smiled again. "He has fur."

"Who has fur?"

"My friend. But he always runs away." Verdie shook his head and wandered back into the dusk.

I reached Stonecroft ten minutes later. No one seems to know just how old my home is. It had begun existence as a modest stone building in a distant time, but generations of Deverauxs had added to it—the last substantial addition being in 1720. My contribution has been the installation of plumbing, electricity, and the telephone. At the present time I occupy only the central portion of the three story structure and very little of that.

When I reached the studded front door, I heard the great key in the lock and the bolt being drawn. The massive door opened.

"Well, Jarman," I said. "Taken to locking the doors?"

He smiled faintly. "It's my wife who insists, sir. She feels that it would be wiser at the present time."

"I've never heard that the monster enters buildings."

"There's always a first time, sir."

Jarman, his wife, and their twenty-year-old son Albert, are my only servants at present. I could perhaps do without Albert, but it is family history that the Deverauxs and the

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Jarmans stepped over the threshold of Stonecroft at approximately the same moment. Turning out a Jarman would be equivalent to removing one of the cornerstones or snatching away the foundation of Stonecroft.

At late breakfast the next morning, I noticed that Jarman seemed worried and preoccupied. When he brought the coffee, I said, "Is there something troubling you, Jarman?"

He nodded. "It's Albert, sir. Yesterday evening he went to the village. He wasn't back by ten-thirty, but my wife and I thought nothing of it and retired. This morning we found that he hadn't slept in his bed."

"Probably spent the night with one of his friends."

"Yes, sir. But he should at least have phoned."

Freddie Hawkins wandered in from the garden and took a seat at the table. "Thought I'd drop over and see if you're tired." He helped himself to bacon. "Sleep well last night?"

"Like a top."

"No sleep walking?"

"Never in my life."

"You look a bit hairy, Gerald."

"I need a haircut and I haven't shaved yet. Bachelor's privilege."

"Do you mind if I examine the bottoms of your shoes?"

"Too personal. Besides, if I roamed the moors last night as the monster, I wouldn't have worn shoes."

"There is the possibility that you are a monster only from the ankles up, Gerald." He took some scrambled eggs. "I suppose you'll be dropping in at the Munsons?"

"Of course."

"Mind if I toddle along?"

"You're frightfully infatuated, aren't you?"

"Fatally. We male Hawkinses are invariably lanky, tired, and muddle-headed, but we are always attracted to the brisk practical woman. The moment I saw Diana and learned that she had once taken a course in accounting, I experienced an immense electrical reaction. You couldn't step out of the picture, could you, Gerald? For an old comrade-in-arms?"

"Not the thing to do."

"Of course," he said glumly. "Not gentlemanly. It's the woman's prerogative to break up things like this." He seemed to have something else on his mind and after a while he spoke again. "Gerald, last night Diana saw the monster."

I frowned. "How do *you* know?"

"She phoned my mother," Freddie said. "They get along rather well." He put down his coffee cup. "Just after she retired, Diana thought she heard a noise outside. She went to the window and there in the moonlit garden she saw the monster. By the time she roused the colonel and he found his shotgun, the creature had scampered away."

I lit a cigar and took several thoughtful puffs.

Freddie watched me. "I don't know what to make of it either." After I shaved we walked to the Munson house.

Diana met us at the door. "Gerald, I'd like to talk to you alone for a few moments, please."

Freddie waved a languid goodbye. "I'll go on to the village. The Red Boar, if anyone needs me desperately."

When we were alone, Diana turned to me. "Really, Gerald, I cannot accept a monster."

"But Freddie is really very. . . ."

"I mean the Deveraux monster."

"Diana, if the animal exists, I believe that it is actually benign."

"Benign, my foot! That thing is dangerous."

"Even if it is, Diana, it seems that only the male Deverauxs have anything to fear."

"Gerald, I am looking at this from the practical point of view. I simply cannot have you murdered after our marriage, especially if we have children. Do you realize that the death duties these days would force me to sell Stonecroft? I might even have to go to London to find some employment. And I do not believe in working mothers."

"But, Diana. . . ."

"I'm sorry, Gerald, but I've been thinking this whole thing over. Especially since last night. I'm afraid I'll have to call off our engagement."

"Diana," I said—and winced. "Is there . . . is there someone else?"

She thought for a moment. "I'll be frank with you, Gerald. I've been examining Freddie. He does seem to need management. I've met his mother and we seem to have a lot in common."

"Freddie has his ghost too," I pointed out. "That cavalier who runs about looking for his horse."

"His sword. But he is entirely harmless. He's tramped about the grounds since 1643 and has never yet harmed anyone."

"Suppose he finds his sword?"

"We will cross that bridge when we come to it."

I went to the window. "That cursed monster."

"It's your own fault," Diana said. "You Deverauxs should have watched your genetics and things like that."

I left her for the village and stopped at the Red Boar. Freddie was rather pale. "I just heard," he said. "Jarman's son, Albert, was found dead on the moor a half an hour ago. Head bashed in. Quite a messy business."

"Good Lord! Who did it?"

"No one knows yet, Gerald. But I'm afraid that people are talking about the Deveraux monster." He smiled faintly. "Gerald, I'm afraid that I've given you a rather hard time about that. I just want to say that I really believe that you only need a haircut and that's all."

I returned immediately to Stonecroft, but the Jarman's had evidently gone on to the village.

I went and unlocked the envelope of my father's letter.

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I went upstairs to the east room and unlocked the chest. I removed the envelope and re-read my grandfather's letter.

... I believe that the expression on my face gave Leslie considerable pleasure. I pulled myself together and was about to ask for some explanation, but Leslie took my arm and led me outside. "Later," he said.

We mounted our horses and rode out of the village. After half a mile, Leslie pulled up and dismounted. He removed his hat and then I watched a transformation. He pulled at his forehead and the coarse hair forming his low hairline came away in his fingers. His bushy eyebrows disappeared in the same manner. "And, my dear brother," he said, "My complexion can be washed away and a good tooth brushing will remove the stain from my teeth."

"Leslie," I demanded sternly. "What is the meaning of this?"

He grinned. "I'm creating a monster. The Deveraux monster."

He put his hand on my shoulder. "Bradley, we Deverauxs have been here since the dawn of history. We were here before the Norman invasion. Deveraux is not French, it is simply a corruption of some pre-historic grunts applied to one of our ancestors. And yet, Bradley, do you realize

that we are not *haunted* by anything or anyone?"

He waved an arm at the horizon. "The Hawkins family has its blasted cavalier. The Trentons have their weeping maid waiting for Johnny to come home from the fair, or some such thing. And even the Burleys, *nou-veau riche*, have their bally butler drifting through the house looking for the fish forks. But what do we have? I'll tell you. *Nothing*."

"But, Leslie," I said. "These are *authentic* apparitions."

"Authentic, my Aunt Marcy! They were all *invented* by someone with imagination to add to the midnight charm of the homeplace. People are not really repelled by ghosts. They *want* them. And so when they do not tell outright lies about seeing them, they eventually *convince* themselves that they have.

"Bradley," Leslie continued. "I am *creating* a Deveraux monster. And what better way than this? The villagers actually *see* me gradually turning into an apelike creature. And in a week or so, I, the human Leslie Deveraux, will disappear."

I blinked. "Disappear?"

"Bradley, I'm the younger son. I cannot possibly remain at Stonecroft the rest of my life waiting for your demise. You seem remarkably healthy. I suppose I could poison you, but I'm really fond of you. Therefore the only

course left is for me to go abroad to seek fame, fortune, and all that rot. But before I go—as a parting present, so to speak—I am leaving you the Deveraux monster. I will be seen wandering the moors—in full costume—and pursuing a passerby here and there. I have had a complete suit constructed, Bradley. It is locked in a chest in the east room and I will don it for my midnight forays.”

I immediately and vigorously launched into argument condemning his scheme as absolutely ridiculous and insane, and, at the time, I thought that I succeeded in convincing him to give up the entire thing. But I should have known Leslie and that half-smile when he finally nodded in agreement.

He wandered the moors in his Deveraux monster suit the next week—though I did not learn about it until later. It seems that people were reluctant to bring the creature’s existence to my attention, since there was a general feeling that Leslie was undergoing a transformation.

And then Leslie disappeared.

It was not until a year later that Leslie wrote me from India, but in the meantime I had no answer to those of our friends who cautiously inquired about his disappearance. In a fit of pique one day, I declared that actually I kept Leslie chained in the east

room. It was an unfortunate remark and my words were eagerly taken at face value by a number of people who should have known better.

I might have exposed the Deveraux myth when Leslie’s letter finally came, if, in the meantime, this district had not enacted the mantrap laws.

I have never scattered mantraps about my grounds. I feel that their jaws are quite capable of severing a poacher’s leg. But I have nourished the *impression* in the countryside and at the village that I was quite liberal in strewing them about my property. That was quite sufficient to keep most of the poachers off my land.

But then, as I mentioned, the mantraps were outlawed, and if I have a reputation for anything, it is obeying the law and the poachers know that. They immediately descended upon me with their snares and traps, causing untold depredations to the American quail and partridge I had introduced on the moor.

I tried everything to stop them, of course. I appealed to the authorities, I hired a gamekeeper, and I even personally threatened to thrash any poacher I apprehended on my property.

But nothing availed.

It was in a moment of total desperation that a wild idea descended upon me. I gathered up the

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house keys and went up to the east room. I opened the chest Leslie had left behind and the Deveraux monster costume was inside.

It fit me perfectly.

I believe I have never since enjoyed myself as much as I did in the next few weeks. At night I would don the costume and wander about. I tell you, my son, it was with the most delicious pleasure that I pursued—with blood-chilling howls—the elder Garvis to the very door of his cottage.

The elder Garvis did not poach again—to my knowledge—but it is unfortunate that his experience, or his relation of that experience, did not make an impression upon his son. He persisted in poaching and eventually toppled off a cliff and broke his neck.

It is widely believed that his demise occurred while the monster pursued him. That is not true. I never met Sam, Jr. on the moors. But I have done nothing to discourage the legend. As a matter of fact, the monster has been "seen" a number of times when I did not leave the house.

And so, my son, when I depart, I leave you the Deveraux monster. Perhaps you too will find some use for him.

Your loving father,
Bradley Deveraux

My own father had added a note.

Gerald, it is remarkable how persistent the Garvis family is. Each Garvis, apparently, must learn about the monster from first hand experience before he refrains from poaching.

I pulled the costume from the chest and slipped into it. At the mirror I gazed at the monster once again.

Yes, he was indeed frightening, and the good colonel *had* fainted.

Norm Wakins had seen the Deveraux monster, and simple Verdie Tibbs, and Diana.

But Albert Jarman? No.

After I let Diana catch a glimpse of me, I had returned directly home. I had met no one on the way and I had gone directly to bed. And slept soundly. Except for the dream.

I removed the head of my costume and stared at my reflection. Did I need a shave again?

At dusk I saw the Jarmans returning to Stonecroft and let them in the front door.

Mrs. Jarman was a spare woman with dark eyes and she stared at me as though she was thinking something she didn't want to believe.

"Mrs. Jarman," I said. "I'd like to extend my most sincere. . . ."

She walked by me and disappeared into the back hall.

Jarman frowned. "Mrs. Jarman is very upset, sir. We all are."

"Of course."

Jarman was about to pass me, but

I stopped him. "Jarman, do the authorities have any idea who might have killed your son?"

"No, sir."

"Is there any . . . any talk?"

"Yes, sir," Jarman said. "There is talk about the Deveraux monster." He sighed. "Excuse me, sir. I should go to my wife."

Before turning in for the night, I opened the bedroom windows for air. The rolling hills of the moor were bright with the moon and in the distance a dog howled. I felt the drift of the cool wind.

A movement in the shadows below caught my eye. I watched the spot until I made out a crouching figure. It moved again and stepped into the light.

It was Verdie Tibbs. He glanced back at the house for a moment and then disappeared into the darkness.

That night I dreamed again. I dreamed that I left the house and roamed across the moors until I found the circle of stones. I remained there waiting. For anyone.

Albert Jarman's funeral took place on Thursday and I, of course, attended. It was a dark day and at the graveside the mist turned to light rain. Most of the countryside seemed to be in attendance and I was conscious that a great many of the eyes found me with a covert glance.

Freddie Hawkins came to Stonecroft the next morning while Jarman and I were going over the household accounts.

He sat down. "Frank Garvis was found dead in his garden this morning. Strangled. He had several tufts of hair . . . or fur . . . clutched in his fingers. Definitely not human, according to the inspector."

Jarman looked up, but said nothing.

I rubbed my neck. "Freddie, just what do *you* make of all this?"

"I don't know. Perhaps some ape has escaped from a circus or something of the sort?"

"The papers would have carried a notice."

He shrugged. "Could there actually *be* a Deveraux monster?" He looked at Jarman. "What do you think?"

"I have no opinion, sir."

Freddie grinned. "Perhaps Gerald rises in the middle of the night, gripped by some mysterious force, and goes loping about the moors searching for a victim." He shook his head. "But I guess that's out too. I hardly think that he would grow fur just for the occasion. Or does he slip into a monkey suit of some kind?"

Freddie looked at me for a few moments and then changed the subject. "My mother told me about your break with Diana. Dreadful sorry, Gerald."

"I think she rather fancies you," I said.

He flushed. "Really?"

"No doubt. She's impressed by your intelligence and drive."

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He smiled. "No need to get nasty."

After he left, I went upstairs to the east room and unlocked the chest. I pulled out the Deveraux monster. Tufts of hair had been torn from both of the arms.

That evening I was in my study with a half empty bottle of whiskey when Jarman entered.

"Will that be all for today, sir?" he asked.

"Yes."

He glanced at the bottle and then turned to go.

"Jarman."

"Yes, sir."

"How is Mrs. Jarman?"

"She is . . . adjusting, sir."

I wanted to pour another glass, but not while Jarman was watching. "Do the authorities still have no suspects for your son's murder?"

"No, sir. No suspects."

"Do *you* have any . . . ideas?"

His eyes flickered. "No, sir."

I decided to pour the glass. "Does your *wife* have any ideas? Does she think that the Deveraux . . . ?" I found myself unable to go on.

I drank the whiskey and my next words came suddenly and were undoubtedly inspired by the drink. "Jarman, I want you to lock me in my bedroom tonight."

"Sir?"

"Lock me in my bedroom," I snapped.

He studied me and there was worry in his eyes.

I took a deep breath and came to a decision. "Jarman, follow me. I have something to show you."

I led him to the east room, unlocked the chest, and put the envelope in his hands. "Read this."

I waited impatiently until he finished and looked up.

"You see," I said. "There is *no* actual Deveraux monster."

"No, sir."

"Jarman, I wouldn't tell you what I am now going to if it weren't for the present circumstances. I must have your word of honor that you will not repeat my words to a soul. To no one at all, do you understand?"

"You have my word, sir."

I paced the room. "First of all, you know that the poachers have been plaguing us again?"

He nodded.

"Well, Jarman, I have been wearing the Deveraux monster. I am the one responsible for chasing Norm Wakins to his door. I am the one who met poor simple Verdie. Accidentally, I assure you. He is not a poacher. He actually tried to make friends with me and I was forced to flee." I stopped pacing. "My only intention was to frighten away poachers."

Jarman smiled faintly. "Is Colonel Munson a poacher?"

I felt myself flushing. "That was a spur of the moment thing. A lark."

He raised an eyebrow ever so slightly. "A lark, sir?"

I decided that I might as well be embarrassingly candid. "Jarman, you are aware that the colonel and Diana Munson came here about eight months ago? And that within two months I found myself engaged?"

"Yes, sir. Rather sudden."

I agreed and cleared my throat. "I was committed and I am a gentleman. A man of my word, but still. . . ."

The corners of Jarman's mouth turned slightly. "You found yourself not quite as happy as you thought you should be?"

I flushed again. "I happened to see Colonel Munson while I was in the monster suit and suddenly it occurred to me that if the colonel, and perhaps Diana herself, should see the monster, they might not be so eager for me to. . . ." I wished that I were downstairs with the bottle.

"I understand, sir," Jarman said. "And I am sure that Miss Munson will be quite satisfied with Mr. Hawkins."

"Jarman," I said. "I have frightened a number of people, but I have injured no one. I am . . . positive . . . that I did not kill your son." I stared down at the Deveraux monster in the chest and at the bare spots on the arms.

Jarman's voice was quiet. "Do you still want to be locked up for the night, sir?"

There was silence in the room and when I looked up, I saw that he was watching me.

Finally Jarman said, "I *know* you didn't kill Albert."

"You *know*?"

"Yes, sir. Two nights ago Verdie Tibbs came to the back door and spoke to me. He saw Albert killed. He saw the murder from a distance, too far away to give aid to Albert . . . and the crime was over in an instant."

Jarman looked tired. "Albert was returning from the village and apparently he came across a set of poacher's snares or nets. According to Verdie, Albert was bending over them and he seemed to be tearing them apart, when suddenly someone leaped behind him and struck him with a rock."

"Who was it?" I demanded.

Jarman closed his eyes for a moment. "Frank Garvis, sir."

"But why didn't Verdie go to the authorities?"

"Verdie was afraid, sir. He's heard talk that he might be sent to an institution and he wants nothing to do with any public officials. But even if he had gone to the authorities, what good would that have done, sir? It would have been the word of simple Verdie against that of Frank Garvis."

"But then *who* killed Garvis last night?" I looked down at the chest again and wondered if I had only been dreaming when. . . .

"Sir," Jarman said quietly. "The Jarman and the Deverauxs have been together ever since the beginning. There are no secrets a Dever-

aux can for long grandfather son, and

He to pocket. 'sir, and me—as my father wear it.

Jarman preferred whole n could se to fear and so you know order a with a d

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aux can keep from a Jarman—not for long." He smiled faintly. "My grandfather also left a letter to his son, and, in turn, to me."

He took a key out of his vest pocket. "This unlocks the chest too, sir, and the Deveraux monster fits me—as it did my grandfather and my father whenever they wished to wear it."

Jarman sighed. "I would have preferred to remain silent on the whole matter and let it pass. But I could see that you were beginning to fear that you were responsible and so I had to speak. Now that you know, I will put my affairs in order and then go to the police with a full confession."

"What have you told your wife?"

"Nothing but that Garvis killed Albert. I did not want her to think what the villagers are thinking."

I rubbed my neck. "Jarman, I fail to see that any . . . good . . . can come of your going to the police."

"Sir?"

"The Deveraux monster murdered Garvis," I said. "I think that it is much, much better if we leave it that way."

After a while, Jarman spoke faintly. "Thank you, sir."

I pulled the Deveraux monster out of the chest. "However I believe that we should destroy this, don't you, Jarman? After all, someone might manage to compare it with the tufts of hair Garvis had in his fingers."

Jarman put the monster over his arm. "Yes, sir. I'll burn it." At the door he looked back. "Is the Deveraux monster dead, sir?"

A sudden gust of moor wind whispered around the shutters.

"Yes," I said. "The Deveraux monster is dead."

When he was gone, I happened to glance at the mirror.

Strange. I rather needed a shave again.

